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# FOCUS

The monthly newsletter of the Joint Center for Political Studies

## JCPS/Gallup Poll Reflects Changing Views on Political Issues

*Unemployment, High Cost of Living, and Drug Abuse Are Top Three Issues for Blacks and Whites*

*Blacks' Democratic Party Identification Softens, and Approval Ratings Rise for President Reagan*

*Jesse Jackson Should Run Again in 1988, Black Majority Say*

## JCPS Political TrendLetter

*Poll Has Mixed Message for Jesse Jackson; Non-Racial Election Strategies; "Across the Nation"*

## Perspective

*Black Voters Have Mainstream Views, May Be Less Loyal to Democrats*

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# Black Voters Have Mainstream Views, May Be Less Loyal to Democrats

For those who fret that blacks dilute their political clout by voting overwhelmingly Democratic and monolithically pursuing policy issues that are not in sync with the mainstream, the Joint Center's latest national poll will bring welcome relief. As I suggested last month, blacks are less monolithic and more flexible than many suspect. Our 1986 poll substantiates this conclusion.

Although we might still be two separate societies in many respects, the survey indicates that black and white America are in agreement about the principal problems before the country—unemployment, the cost of living, crime, and drug abuse. They also come very close in their ranking of several other issues, like education and health care. I believe this is a significant development because it could help set the stage for new dimensions of cooperation in pursuing important national objectives.

An especially noteworthy issue area is civil rights. It is further down the list of priority issues for blacks than it was in 1984 and is perhaps lower than it has been at any time in the recent past. Indications are that blacks are opting for greater emphasis on basic social and economic issues. What is a major concern is that while civil rights ranks 6th on a list of 21 items for blacks, it is a shocking 19th for whites. One wonders whether the unrelenting attack on civil rights issues and leaders by the present administration might not be a major contributor to white attitudes on this issue.

A second noteworthy set of findings concerns partisanship trends. Here, there is both good news and bad news for the two parties. Democrats will be relieved to see that despite the talk of party realignment and the recent efforts of Republicans to recruit black support, blacks show no sign of switching parties. They remain overwhelmingly Democratic, with less than 7 percent considering themselves Republicans.

The bad news for Democrats and the good news for Republicans emerge when we look more closely at the party support data. Fewer blacks now regard themselves as strong Democrats than did so in 1984—a 6 percentage point drop (55 percent to 49 percent) in just two years. While blacks are still voting Democratic, this is the clearest evidence we have that the Democratic party might indeed be losing its grip on the core of its black support. Also noteworthy in this regard is the fact that younger blacks—those under 30—are much less loyal to the Democratic party than older age cohorts.

A third point worthy of attention focuses on the 1988 elections. The survey shows that Jesse Jackson is far and away the most widely known of the people being mentioned as potential candidates. Most of the potential contenders in both parties have a long way to go in establishing a presence with the electorate.

Finally, the survey suggests that blacks continue to close the gap in registration and turnout. Whites and blacks report almost identical levels of registration, and there is a very narrow gap between the races in intention to vote. Moreover, more blacks than whites report having paid attention to the 1986 mid-term elections.

All of these findings suggest the continuing movement of blacks into the mainstream of American politics, where their influence continues to grow.

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

**FOCUS**

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# JCPS/Gallup Poll Reflects Changing Views On Political Issues

*by Fredrick Harris and Linda Williams*

On October 14, 1986, the Joint Center released the results of a national poll on the views of blacks and whites about several key political issues. (The box on this page describes the poll methodology and explains why this poll is more representative of black views than most other public opinion data on blacks.) The 1986 survey is the second in what will from now on be annual JCPS/Gallup surveys. The first such poll was conducted in July 1984. By comparing the findings of the 1984 and 1986 surveys, we can identify changes that have occurred in the political views of black Americans in the past two years.

The changes that we describe below are noteworthy on several counts. First, they affect each of the major subject categories in the surveys: most important issues, partisanship, presidential approval, and support for Jesse Jackson. Second, some changes are on questions that political analysts believe to be of special significance. For instance, the fact that fewer blacks than in 1984 identified themselves as "strong" Democrats suggests a softening of party identification; Republicans may view this as a "window of opportunity" through which to attract black voters. Equally noteworthy is the fact that "civil rights" is not among the top three issues for blacks in 1986, though it was ranked third in 1984. Third, there has been much speculation and public debate—but not much reliable data—on such questions as blacks' loyalty to the Democrats and the level of their support for President Reagan, among other important issues. Thus, the results we present in this article will, we hope, inform and stimulate those who are thinking about these critical issues.

Though the changes we have identified are significant, they should not be overstated. No sweeping changes have occurred. Americans of every race generally exhibit extremely stable and unvarying views for long periods of time. This is particularly true for party identification. For example, southern whites started leaving the Democratic party in 1948 when the party included its first civil rights plank, but it took more than 30 years for a plurality of southern whites to shift their allegiance to the Republican party. Similarly, few blacks—long-time adherents of the "party of Lincoln"—voted for Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, despite having suffered miserably under Herbert Hoover's Republican administration. Though an overwhelming majority of blacks did vote for Roosevelt in 1936 (about 70 percent—at least doubling Roosevelt's 1932 share), it wasn't until 1964 that blacks fully embraced the Democrats. And even as late as 1972, 30 percent of black voters supported a Republican presidential candidate—Richard Nixon.

(Continued on next page)

Dr. Linda Williams is a senior research associate and Fredrick Harris is a research assistant at the Joint Center.

## How the Poll Was Conducted

The Joint Center for Political Studies/Gallup public opinion poll on black and white American attitudes toward a wide range of political, economic, and social issues was conducted by face-to-face interviews in the continental United States during the week of August 8, 1986. In all, 868 black persons and 916 whites persons, selected at random, were interviewed.

The survey included about seven times as many blacks as are usually interviewed in a national multiracial poll. Most blacks in the sample were interviewed by blacks. The poll is more reliable than most national polls, not only because it interviewed more blacks and used black interviewers, but also because the interviews were conducted in person rather than by telephone. Telephone surveys disproportionately underrepresent less affluent black Americans.

The sample was weighted (adjusted slightly) to conform to Census Bureau figures for the overall black and white populations in regard to demographic factors such as age, education, and sex.

Theoretically, in 19 of 20 cases, a poll of the size of the black sample and the white sample is subject to a margin of sampling error of about 4 percentage points for each group. Practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion, however, may introduce other sources of error into the poll.

(JCPS/Gallup Poll continued)

## A Common National Agenda

Perhaps the most striking change shown by the survey results is the convergence between blacks and whites on the major issues of the day. The results of the 1984 survey demonstrated that blacks and whites differed sharply on the three most important issues. Blacks named unemployment, government programs to help the poor, and civil rights. Whites shared blacks' concern over unemployment, but named the federal deficit and inflation as equally important issues.

In 1986, however, the issue agendas of blacks and whites had both changed and converged. (See bar graph on this page.) When asked to name the three most important issues, blacks cited unemployment (56 percent), the high cost of living (33 percent), and drug abuse (32 percent). For whites, the order of the top three issues differed somewhat, but whites, too, cited the same three issues as their most important concerns: drug abuse (35 percent), unemployment (29 percent), and the high cost of living (28 percent).

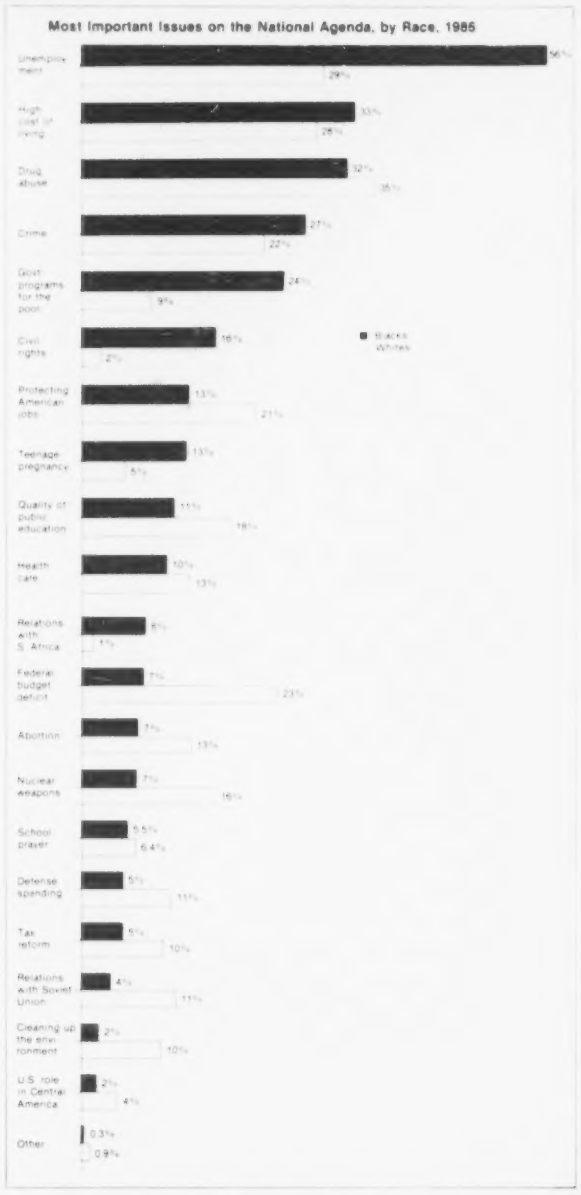
***Economic and criminal justice issues have become the dominant concerns of black and white Americans.***

Four other issues (crime, protecting American jobs, the quality of public education, and health care) also ranked among the top 10 issues on both blacks' and whites' lists of concerns. Indeed, it is interesting to note that a larger proportion of blacks than whites cited crime as a main concern.

Thus, on the most basic issue of all—the nation's major public policy priorities—blacks and whites now have substantially similar views.

To be sure, differences on the major issues of concern still exist. The issues that disproportionately afflict black Americans ranked far higher on their lists of concerns than on the lists of whites. Thus government programs to help the poor ranked 5th for blacks, but only 15th for whites; civil rights of minority groups ranked 6th for blacks, but near the bottom at 19th for whites; and teenage pregnancy ranked 8th for blacks, but only 17th for whites. Similarly, relations with South Africa were a relatively important issue for blacks (11th), but the least important issue for whites.

Overall, however, economic and criminal justice issues have become the dominant concerns of black and white Americans. These concerns even removed civil rights from among the top three issues for blacks. While 38 percent of blacks cited civil rights as a key concern in 1984, only 16 percent cited it in 1986. This suggests not so much that civil rights has diminished in importance as that the economic and criminal justice issues have become so overriding that they displace civil rights.




## Disagreement on Solutions

Though blacks and whites agree on what should be the main items on the national agenda, they fundamentally disagree over the role of government in resolving many of these problems. For example, when asked whether the federal government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living, 65 percent of blacks said it should, but only 24 percent of whites thought so. When asked whether the federal government should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks, 80 percent of blacks, but only 27 percent of whites, thought it should. On the other hand, whites were likely to give more support to the idea of individuals "getting ahead on their own" versus government intervention.

(Continued on page 5)

October 1986

JCPS

# POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

## Inside This Issue

- **A national poll shows that Jesse Jackson is the most recognized of the likely Democratic presidential contenders in 1988, but the poll also shows no gain in his support since 1984.**
- **Pioneering black politicians are running for office in majority-white jurisdictions, but they face an uphill battle to get white support.**
- **Students at the University of California at Berkeley have established a political action committee dedicated to electing a U.S. Congress that will fight for a free South Africa.**
- **The Supreme Court's recent *Gingles* decision, which outlawed multi-member districts for diluting black voting strength, has led to lawsuits by minority voters in Florida and Louisiana.**

## National Poll Has Mixed Message for Jesse Jackson

**A JCPS/Gallup national survey has some good news and some not-so-good news for JESSE JACKSON** if he decides to run again for president in 1988. **The good news is that among black and white respondents in the survey he is the most recognized of all the likely Democratic presidential contenders.** Jackson's name was recognized by 97 percent of blacks and 90 percent of whites. By comparison, 62 percent of blacks and 80 percent of whites recognized Senator **GARY HART,** 46 percent of blacks and 79 percent of whites recognized Chrysler Chairman **LEE IACOCCA,** and 24 percent of blacks and 51 percent of whites recognized New York Governor **MARIO CUOMO.** Other potential presidential candidates, like Senator **BILL BRADLEY, San Francisco Mayor DIANNE FEINSTEIN, Arizona Governor BRUCE BABBITT, Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, Los Angeles Mayor TOM BRADLEY, and former Virginia Governor CHARLES ROBB, were recognized by even fewer respondents. . . .The not-so-good news for Jackson is that his level of support for a 1988 presidential bid has remained virtually unchanged since 1984:** 69 percent of blacks and 22 percent of whites want Jackson to run again, and 63 percent of blacks and 6 percent of whites want him to win the Democratic nomination. **This combination** of a very high name-recognition and the same level of support as in 1984 **suggests that Jackson may not be able to win new converts to his camp; his support may have peaked.**

**However, other data in the survey show that Jackson's support is not static,** particularly in the composition of his black supporters. **In 1984, Jackson got his support more from affluent blacks** than from the "dispossessed" and poor Americans he targeted (a point made in Yale professor **ADOLPH REED's** book, *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon).* **The 1986 data, however, reveal that the reverse is now true: Jackson's support declines as the level of education, occupational status, and income goes up.** In short, Jackson's 1986 base of support (for a 1988 presidential bid) is more likely to come from blacks who have less education, lower income, and are in lower-status occupational categories. . . .As in 1984, **Jackson's 1986 black supporters are also more likely to be from the South** than from any other region, **to be suburban and rural** rather than urban, and somewhat more likely to be **younger** rather than older, **and female** rather than male. **Jackson's strong base of support in the southern states, most of which have at least a 20 percent black population, could give him a dramatic boost in the newly structured "southern primary."**

**Should Jackson run as a Democrat or as an Independent?** Of those who wanted him to run again in 1988, 69 percent of blacks and 40 percent of whites said Democrat, and 18 percent of blacks and 40 percent of whites said Independent. Some even wanted him to run as a Republican: 4 percent of blacks and 3 percent of whites. . . . **Clearly, the majority of blacks want Jackson to run again—and as a Democrat. But his "Rainbow Coalition" still has only a basic ebony hue.**

## *Testing the Appeal of a Non-racial Election Strategy*

If there is a noteworthy trend in the generally low-turnout, low-interest 1986 campaign season, it is that **several black candidates are seeking office in majority-white districts.** When the election results are finally tallied, **it is unlikely that many of them will win—and some have already lost** at the party primary stage, as reported in the September *TrendLetter*. **Yet, valuable lessons can be learned from the experiences of these pioneering politicians** as they scale one of the remaining barriers to the election of more blacks to public office.

**In Virginia, for example, state Senator BOBBY SCOTT is waging a campaign with a broad-based appeal designed to remove race as an issue. "I don't even bring up race,"** he said in an interview with *TrendLetter*. Scott points out that several black candidates have been elected in majority-white jurisdictions in Virginia. **The winning strategy, he says, is to "look at what successful Democrats,** like [former Governor] **CHUCK ROBB,** [current Governor] **GERRY BALILES,** and [current Lieutenant Governor] **DOUG WILDER have done." The challenge to black candidates, he says, is "to get voters to think about you" by stressing issues—rather than raising questions about whether blacks can win. . . .** Similarly, **in Maryland ISIAH (IKE) LEGGETT,** a Howard University Law School professor who won the Democratic party's nomination in September for an at-large seat on the Montgomery County Council, **and ALEX WILLIAMS,** another Howard law professor, who won the Democratic nomination for Prince George's County state's attorney, **say they ran the same kind of campaign—they deemphasized race whenever possible. Instead, both men worked at building coalitions, sought support from Democratic party officials and elected leaders, and talked about working within the system.** Both won their primaries with the help of endorsements from key political figures in the Democratic party and support from numerous white voters; and, at press time, both were expected to win the elections.

**In Louisiana,** however, congressional candidate **FAYE WILLIAMS appeared to be facing greater obstacles, even though she won the Democratic nomination** in this 38 percent black, 88 percent Democratic district. Based on party affiliation, **Williams would seem the odds-on favorite** to win the November 4 general election, **but as *TrendLetter* went to press she faced the possibility that white Democrats are more likely to vote Republican than vote for a black candidate.** The saying "skin color is deeper than party affiliation" may again prove to be true, since **local white Democratic leaders** (including three of Williams's defeated rivals and the retiring incumbent, Representative Cathy Long) **have been reluctant to endorse or actively support Williams in the general election. However, she was endorsed by the Democratic senate hopeful, Representative JOHN BREAUX, by one of her defeated rivals (Carson Killens), and by the AFL-CIO. . . . The Republicans, meanwhile, were crowing over their unexpected chance of winning this seat** and promised the "maximum amount" of campaign funding for the Republican candidate, **CLYDE HOLLOWAY,** who is a two-time loser in this district who never won more than 20-25 percent of the vote.

In the **California** gubernatorial race, Los Angeles Mayor **TOM BRADLEY took the offensive in October with an unusual issue for a black candidate—toxic waste.** In his television ads, Bradley attacks Governor **GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN** for being soft on pollution and accepting campaign contributions from manufacturers who pollute. **Bradley has also addressed the issue of his race, which he didn't do in the 1982 campaign, by saying: "Because I have a black skin, and no black has ever been elected governor of California or any other state, the real issues...may not be what determine the outcome in this election."** (In 1982, when Bradley lost by only 1 percent of the vote, a Field

poll estimated a 3 percent racial backlash vote against him.)... **In Michigan,** gubernatorial candidate **WILLIAM LUCAS'S strategy was to appeal to whites on the basis of his conservatism and to blacks on the grounds that he would make history as the nation's first black governor.** At press time, **both components of this strategy appear to be failing:** an endorsement and campaign appearance by President **REAGAN** led to a drop in Lucas support among voters of all races, and **black Democratic leaders,** like Detroit's Mayor **COLEMAN YOUNG** and Congressman **JOHN CONYERS, have villified Lucas for embracing Reagan and the Religious Right....In sum, black candidates in majority-white jurisdictions face steep, uphill battles. White voters remain reluctant to support black candidates even when they win their party's nomination. Yet, those black candidates who make the best showing may be those who de-emphasize race in their campaigns and run as coalition-builders within the party.** The lingering concern among blacks is whether black officials who are dependent on white votes can effectively work on the issues of concern to most blacks.

## Across the Nation

### California

**A group of law students and recent graduates from the University of California at Berkeley have established "Freedom Now," a political action committee** (as opposed to a lobbying organization) **dedicated to electing a U.S. Congress that will fight for a free South Africa.** They are seeking to defeat pro-apartheid senators and representatives in 1986 and in future elections. **Thus they are targeting only those races where the election of one of the candidates will advance the cause of a free South Africa—i.e., contests where a supporter of U.S. government action against the Pretoria regime is in a close race against a candidate who does not support such action.** A candidate's party affiliation and position on most other issues do not affect support by the PAC...Freedom Now's chair **GEOFFREY TAYLOR GIBBS,** is the son of Dr. **JAMES GIBBS,** professor of anthropology at Stanford University, and Dr. **JEWELL GIBBS,** associate professor in the School of Social Welfare at Berkeley.

### Florida

A bi-partisan coalition of prominent black and Hispanic **Dade County community leaders filed a federal class action lawsuit alleging that at-large, county-wide elections of Metro commissioners were discriminatory under the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Thornburg v. Gingles*.** The lawsuit alleges that **in the 29-year history of the Metro commission only one black (insurance agent EARL CARROLL) and no Hispanics have been elected to the eight-member commission** without first being appointed. **Nineteen percent of Dade County's registered voters are black and 25 percent are Hispanic.**

### Georgia

**A runoff election victory by MICHAEL HIGHTOWER (D-District 7) has produced a black majority on the Fulton County Commission for the first time in its history.** Other blacks on the seven-member commission, which governs Georgia's largest county, are **Commission Chairman MICHAEL LOMAX and Commissioners A. REGINALD EAVES and CHUCK WILSON. (MARTIN LUTHER KING III, who faces a Republican opponent in the general election, is also likely to be elected.)** Hightower defeated the incumbent, **BRUCE BANISTOR,** 53 percent to 47 percent, in the runoff; he had no Republican opponent in the general election.

### Louisiana

In Louisiana, as in Florida, the Supreme Court's ***Gingles* ruling has spawned a lawsuit asserting that at-large election districts—this time for electing state judges—dilute black voting power** and violate the Voting Rights Act. At present, **only 8 (1.9 percent) of 410 elected judges in Louisiana are black, though 27 percent of the state's voting-age population is black.**

In other news, **HOWARD MARSELLUS, SR.,** the chairman of the state prison Pardon Board, and state Representative and Speaker Pro Tem **JOSEPH A. DELPIT were indicted jointly on one count of criminal conspiracy to commit public bribery and separately on one count**

**each of public bribery.** Marsellus and Delpit are black. Both have been accused of receiving bribes from a state police undercover agent who posed as a family friend of a convicted murderer and sought to buy a pardon.

## Massachusetts

**Former state Representative and one-time Boston mayoral candidate MEL KING,** who was defeated in the Democratic congressional primary in the 8th district (Cambridge), **championed an ill-fated November 4 referendum calling for the secession of minority neighborhoods from Boston.** The proposed new municipality would have been named **"Mandela" in honor of the jailed South African leader.**

In western Massachusetts, **state Representative RAYMOND JORDAN, JR., won the Democratic nomination for reelection by a 1,012 vote margin** and headed into the general election without Republican or Independent opposition on the ballot. **Jordan is the only black legislator in western Massachusetts, and this was his toughest election campaign in 12 years in office.**

## Mississippi

**Democratic congressional candidate MIKE ESPY copied a page from the campaign book of Glendora Mayor JOHNNY THOMAS, who recently won a special election to become the first black on the Tallachatie County Board of Supervisors.** In his successful campaign, **Mayor Thomas copied lists of registered voters and compared them to lists of registered motor vehicle drivers (who are identified by race) to obtain the names of registered black voters.** Espy adopted this strategy in the closing weeks of his campaign to maximize his chances of getting a large black turnout—which he needs to win.... **Espy supporters do not expect to get the votes of many whites, but they have welcomed the active support and campaigning of three white statewide elected officials: Attorney General ED PITTMAN, State Auditor RAY MABUS, and Secretary of State DICK MOLPUS.**

## Texas

**The Board of Commissioners in Jefferson County (Beaumont) is scheduled to get its first black elected county commissioner.** The two candidates are businessmen **ED MOORE,** who defeated the white incumbent, 64 percent to 36 percent, in the Democratic primary, and **PRESTON FRANK,** who was unopposed as a Republican. **The winner will represent Precinct 4 which was redrawn last year after the settlement of a federal voting rights lawsuit to make it majority (57 percent) black.** Moore conceded that he would have had a difficult time winning the primary without the redistricting. Moore was favored to win since no Republican has been elected to the Board since Reconstruction.

## Utah

**State Senator TERRY WILLIAMS, who lost the Democratic primary in the U.S. Senate race by 261 votes, demanded a recount—and gave his opponent a slightly larger margin of victory...275 votes.** Senator Williams was entitled to a recount at no personal expense because the vote margin was less than the number of voting districts in the state—1,804. **At last report, Williams, who is the only black elected official in the state, said he may mount a write-in candidacy.**

## Virginia

**JAMES R. SPENCER,** a former federal prosecutor and Legal Aid attorney, **has been confirmed by the U.S Senate as Virginia's first black federal judge.** Spencer, a Harvard Law School graduate, was nominated by Senator **JOHN WARNER** (R-Va.) and received a bi-partisan chorus of support. **His former boss, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia JOSEPH DIGENOVA, said, "He is extremely serious about his work...and that's of course why he was successful [as a prosecutor].**" In the U.S. attorney's office, Spencer spent the bulk of his time prosecuting narcotics cases.

Compiled by: Linda Williams, Senior Research Associate, and Alfred Baltimore, Roster Clerk.

(JCPS/Gallup Poll continued)

## Declining Loyalty to the Democratic Party

A second change is a weakening of party loyalty. The allegiance of blacks to the Democratic party has been described often enough. Since the 1964 presidential election that pitted Lyndon Johnson, a Democratic president who signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, against Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican nominee who campaigned on his adamant opposition to that act, blacks have been perhaps the most loyal part of the Democratic party's base. In 1984 when Republican Ronald Reagan won a landslide election against Democrat Walter Mondale, blacks, who made up only 10 percent of the total national electorate, contributed 25 percent of the national Democratic vote.

The 1986 JCPS/Gallup survey, however, reveals a softening in the loyalty of blacks to the Democratic party. While the overwhelming majority of blacks (78 percent) are Democrats and only 7 percent are Republicans (see pie chart on this page), a smaller proportion of blacks identified themselves in 1986 as strong Democrats than had done so in 1984—49 percent in 1986 compared to 55 percent in 1984.

This 6-point drop in the past two years should be an early warning sign that blacks may be prepared to leave the Democrats. Other results in the survey show, however, that blacks still strongly identify with the Democrats: 85 percent of blacks reported they would vote for the Democratic candidate in their congressional districts in 1986, and thinking ahead to the 1988 presidential election 80 percent reported they are likely to support the Democratic nominee. In both instances fewer than 8 percent of blacks said they were likely to vote for Republican candidates.

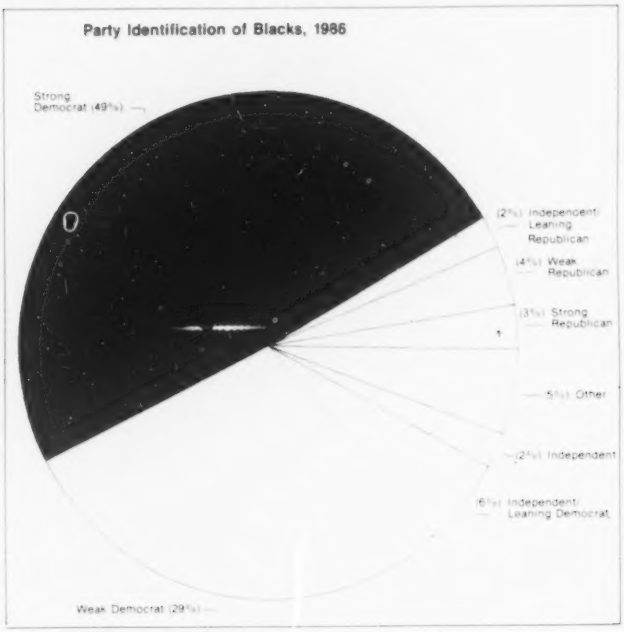
## Higher Approval Ratings For President Reagan

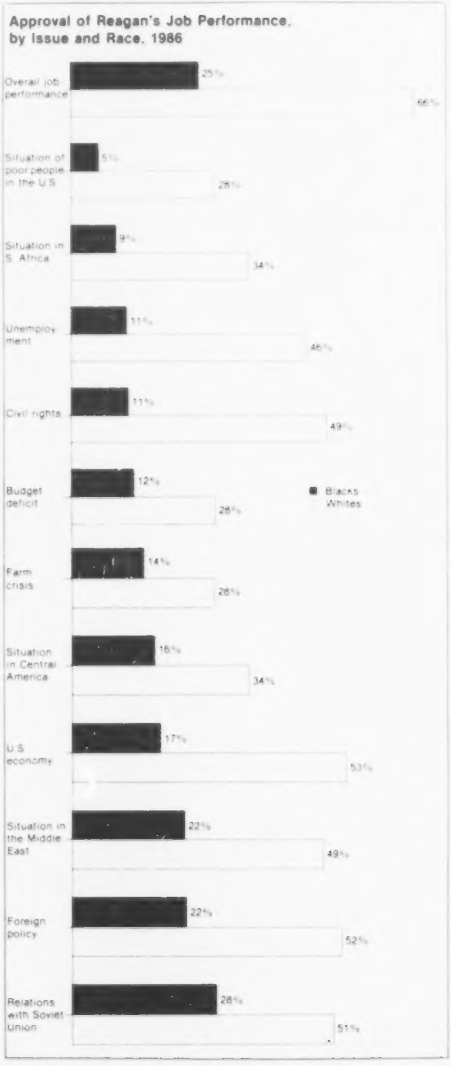
A third change in black views since 1984 is in approval of the president's overall job performance. Since 1984, President Reagan's overall job performance rating among blacks has tripled, from 8 percent in July 1984 to 29 percent in August 1986.

Nevertheless, blacks and whites remain mirror images of each other in their views of the president's performance: two of every three whites approve of the way the president is handling his job while two of every three blacks disapprove.

While Reagan's ratings on most domestic issues (e.g., unemployment, the situation of poor people, civil rights) are abysmally low and remain unchanged from 1984 to 1986, his ratings among blacks on foreign policy issues improved by between 10 and 15 percentage points. (See bar graph on this page for 1986 results.)

One important exception to this pattern is the president's handling of the situation in South Africa. In the 1986 poll, taken even before the president vetoed



legislation mandating sanctions against South Africa's apartheid regime, 78 percent of blacks disapproved of the president's policy toward South Africa, and only 9 percent approved. This was the second lowest approval rating blacks gave the president. Indeed, a majority of blacks sampled in this poll want even tougher sanctions than those recently passed by Congress. Fifty-three percent think the U.S. government should require all U.S. businesses now in South Africa to close their operations, and only 25 percent oppose such action.

Younger blacks (those under 30) and black men were disproportionately likely to approve of the president's overall performance and his performance on foreign policy.

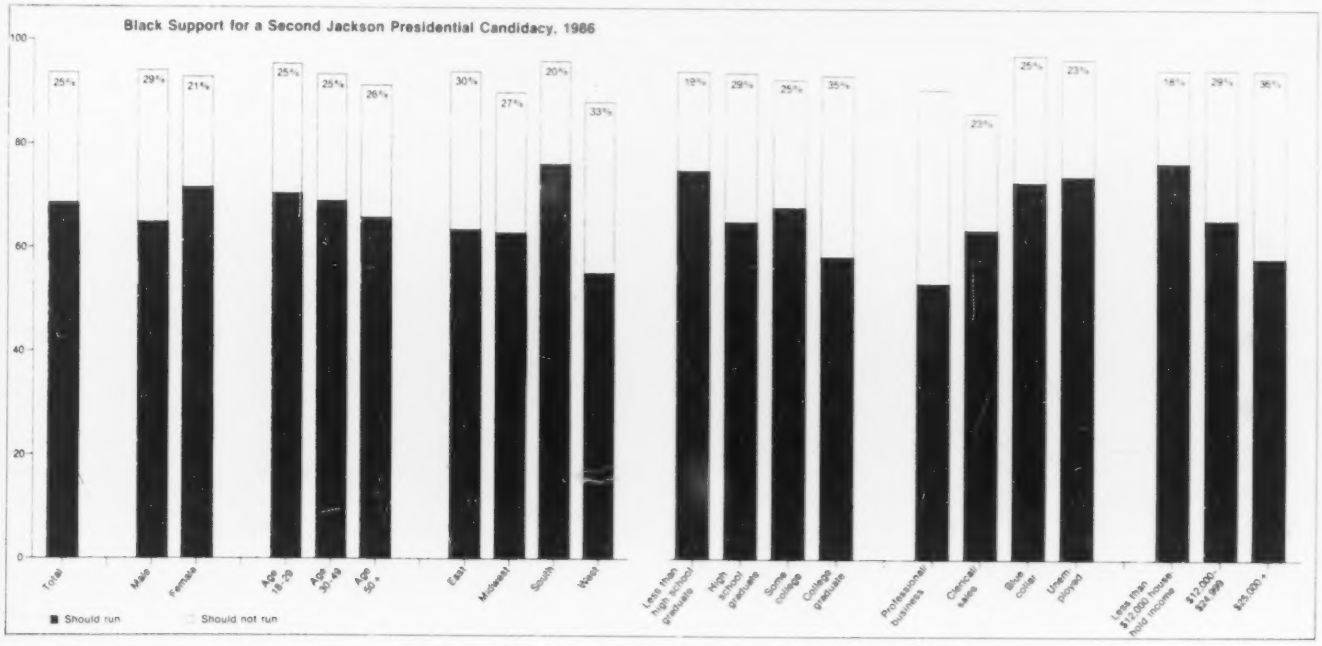
## Growing Class Differences in Support for Jesse Jackson

A fourth change pertained to support for a second presidential bid for Jesse Jackson in 1988. While majorities of practically every demographic category (and 68 percent of blacks in general) support such a bid, the size of the majority declines as the level of education, occupational status, and income goes up. In short, a second presidential bid for Jackson in 1988 receives disproportionate support not only from younger blacks and southern blacks, but also from less educated, lower-income, and lower-status occupational categories of blacks. (See bar graph on this page.) This is a reversal from 1984, when Jackson's support came mostly from affluent and better educated blacks. ( For more on Jackson's support for a second presidential bid, see *TrendLetter*.)

## Black Men Now Better Off, Change Views

One possible explanation for why black men are twice as likely as black women (34 percent to 17 percent) to approve of the Reagan administration is that the economic status of black men is slightly better than that of black women. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income of black men in 1985 was $10,768, while the median income of black women was $6,277. Moreover, between 1984 and 1985, the median income of black men in current dollars grew by 14 percent (from $9,448 in 1984), compared to an increase of only 2 percent for black women (from $6,164 in 1984). And black men in the 1986 JCPS/Gallup survey are more likely than black women to report that their financial condition improved as a result of Reagan's economic policies (28 percent of black men said their financial situation was "somewhat better" or "much better," compared to 17 percent of black women). Black men (22 percent) were also more likely to approve of the way President Reagan was handling "economic conditions in this country" than black women were (12 percent).

The emergence of a gender gap among blacks may also be attributable to a more hawkish stance on foreign policy among black men. While the views of black men were indistinguishable from the views of black women on most domestic policy issues, men were more likely to approve of the president on foreign policy (by approximately 10 percentage points).



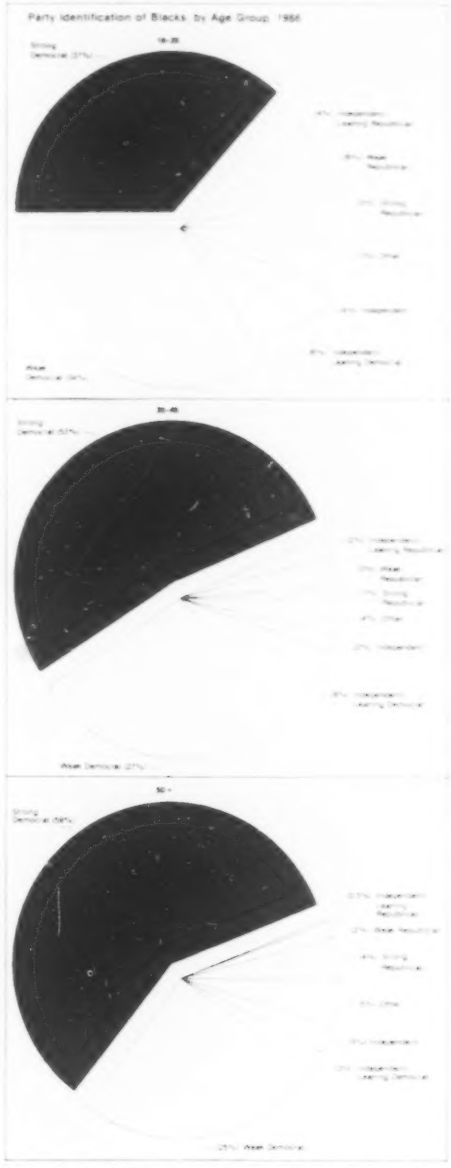
## The Post-Civil-Rights Generation

Younger blacks are especially less likely to identify themselves as strong Democrats: only 37 percent of blacks under 30 do so, compared to more than 50 percent of blacks over 30. (See pie charts on this page.) Moreover, although the differences are very small, it appears that blacks under 30 are more likely than blacks over 30 to identify themselves as Republicans. While 10 years ago, half of all black Republicans were over 50 years old, in the 1986 survey half of all black Republicans are under 30 years old—a complete reversal.

The "generational theory" of Paul Abramson and other political scientists may help explain the differences of political opinion among blacks of different age groups. That theory posits that key events during the formative years of a generation help shape political attitudes of that age cohort in later years. As described earlier in this article, blacks aged 18-29 are more likely than older blacks to have weak ties to the Democratic party and to approve of President Reagan's job performance. What events in their lives help explain these views?

The post-civil rights generation of blacks (those 18-29) reached political maturity after the mid-1970s. Their formative years were a period of comparatively few (if any) advances in civil rights, less protest, more integration of public schools and public accommodations, and relatively more affluence among blacks than in the formative years of their parents and grandparents. Most had little or no direct experience with Jim Crow and, to a large extent, they are the immediate beneficiaries of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. They have vague, if any, recollections of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, urban riots, or the strong efforts of black Americans to secure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs—all events and personalities that shaped the political attitudes of older black Americans, who experienced and vividly remember that period in American history.

Unlike the post-civil rights generation, the civil rights generation (blacks 30-49) reached political maturity during the the 1950s and 1960s, a period of rapid social change and high salience for civil rights issues among blacks and other Americans. The shared experiences of the civil rights generation may explain this cohort's stronger attachment to the Democratic party and greater disapproval of a president who has been viewed as an enemy of civil rights for minority groups.




Finally, the New Deal generation (blacks 50 or older) came into political maturity before the civil rights movement and witnessed the social advances made by blacks during the 1950s and the 1960s. This cohort is likely to have lived through the Great Depression or to have been born during it. Although the New Deal offered little along the lines of a formal legislative or judicial attack on the institutions of white supremacy, some advances in the position of blacks were achieved as spin-offs from legislation designed to benefit the lower income strata generally. This generation of blacks was largely converted to the Democratic party—and has remained staunchly loyal to it. Of all age groups, they least approve of the way Reagan is handling his job as president. ■

## JCPS PARLEY CLARIFIES ISSUES IN CONTROVERSIAL SET-ASIDE DEBATE

A one-day JCPS conference on minority set-asides brought together well over 100 people, including public officials, entrepreneurs, scholars, government administrators, and journalists. The purpose of the conference was to spur a critical examination of set-asides within the community of affirmative action supporters.

Among the speakers were Drew S. Days III, a Yale law professor and former assistant attorney general who successfully argued the Supreme Court case which established the constitutionality of set-asides, and retiring Congressman Parren Mitchell, who has played a leading role in the enactment of federal set-aside legislation. Days favored taking a second look at set-aside laws to ensure that they were narrowly tailored to withstand constitutional scrutiny.

During his luncheon address Congressman Parren Mitchell cast the debate in terms of economic empowerment. He said that opponents of set-asides who charge reverse discrimination were opposed to set-asides precisely because they were succeeding.

Also speaking at the conference was Robert Suggs, a senior research associate at JCPS, who noted that set-asides would have to be maintained for several decades if they were to be effective.

A full conference report will appear in a future issue of *Focus*.

## JCPS DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS PROGRAM: APPLICATIONS INVITED

The Joint Center is now accepting applications for its third annual Distinguished Scholars competition. The program is funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation and enables outstanding scholars and public policy analysts to spend up to one year in residence at the Joint Center in Washington, D.C., to conduct research on issues of fundmental importance to black Americans. A maximum stipend of $60,000 will be given to the scholar selected for the year.

The Joint Center is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy research institution. Its research covers three broad areas—economic policy, social policy, and political participation. The Joint Center conducts demographic studies and maintains an extensive data bank on the social, economic, and political characteristics of black Americans.

The scholar selected will have great flexibility in planning a program of activities for the fellowship year. She/he will be expected to complete at least one major piece of publishable research on a topic of mutual interest to the scholar and the Joint Center.

Applicants for 1987-88 should submit a curriculum vitae and a statement of no more than 2,500 words describing the project to be completed during their stay at the Joint Center and the ways in which their interests relate to the Joint Center's work. Applicants should arrange to have two letters of support for the project sent to the Joint Center, indicating the candidate's ability to bring the work to successful completion.

Applications must be postmarked no later than December 5, 1986. The award will be announced early 1987.

For more information write Distinguished Scholars Program, Joint Center for Political Studies, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004; or call (202) 626-3562. ■

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# FOCUS

The monthly newsletter of the Joint Center for Political Studies

## 1986 Elections: Major Implications for Blacks

*Will the Senate and the Democrats Reward Black Voters?*
*What Will Black Politics Be Like in the Post-Reagan Era?*

## Workfare Is No Panacea for Ills of Poverty

*Few May Benefit, But Not the Large Underclass*

## Political TrendLetter

*Voter Turnout; Congressional Black Caucus; Statewide Winners; "Across the Nation"*

## Perspective

PLUS:
1986 *Focus* Index

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# The Message of the Black Vote in 1986

Now that voters have cast their ballots and the final results of the 1986 midterm elections have been posted, a new kind of campaign is under way as politicians and the press seek to interpret the election results. Putting a "spin" on election results is an old game, but one with great significance because it determines who is ultimately perceived as the "winners" and the "losers."

This year the spinners, those who tilt or manipulate election results to their own advantage, have been especially active, seeking to influence political decisions over the next two years and to shape the environment for the 1988 presidential election.

The Democratic spin suggests that their recapture of the U.S. Senate by a 55 to 45 seat margin puts them in an excellent position to defang the Reaganites during the next two years and to recapture the White House in 1988. The Republican spin suggests that the midterm elections were decided on state and local and not national issues and therefore have few implications for the outcome of the 1988 presidential election.

The spin that blacks put on the 1986 election suggests that they are a major factor that both parties must reckon with. It is a spin with considerable substance.

In assessing the significance of the black vote in 1986, the key question is whether black voters provided the margin of support that made the difference in some key elections. By this yardstick, as reported in this issue, the black vote was critical in giving Senate control to the Democrats and in electing more blacks to public office, including three new members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Although blacks supported the losing gubernatorial candidates in Texas, Florida, and California, they preferred the winning Democrats in Pennsylvania, Michigan (against a black GOP candidate) and stemmed the tide of Democratic losses in other states. In sum, the tally sheet for black voters includes a host of key victories and a few tough losses—not a bad take, in betting terms.

Yet, some pundits have begun to put their own "spin" on these results and to question the importance of the black vote. It is as if black voters have been felled by an election-night neutron bomb, which leaves their vote intact but makes them invisible in the aftermath of victory.

What these pundits seem to be saying—indeed encouraging—is that black voters, by virtue of their overwhelming support of Democratic candidates in 1986, have made themselves the "Typhoid Mary" of American politics. This spurious logic seems to suggest that Democrats, who need to win the Southern white vote in 1988, value blacks only "in the booth in the back in the corner in the dark" (in the words of Flip Wilson's Geraldine) while Republicans offer only a reluctant courtship toward the black vote.

This reasoning, to be charitable, demeans the sophistication and enlightened self-interest of the black vote and encourages bi-partisan racism. By voting overwhelmingly Democratic, blacks demonstrated as much pragmatism as partisanship, a stance other groups have taken and continue to take without being painted as "Typhoid Mary." When Republican candidates offer as much, if not more, to blacks than Democrats, they can expect black support. When Democrats become complacent about black support, they run the risk of defections or low turnout. The 1988 presidential election may well determine which road blacks will take.

Meanwhile, the task for black voters is to make sure that those who won with our votes now heed their voices. Unless the concerns of blacks are now placed on the agendas in Congress and in state and local legislatures, they could be provoked next time around into voting with their ballots or on their bottoms.

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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# Workfare Is No Panacea for Ills of Poverty

## *Few May Benefit, But Not the Large Underclass*

*by William O'Hare*

The White House is soon expected to release a report on welfare reform that President Reagan called for in his State of the Union address in 1986. Though the report's content is not yet known, the welfare reform idea most frequently mentioned both inside and outside the government is — workfare—a term whose meaning has changed over the years.

Originally, workfare referred to a punitive program that required all welfare recipients to perform work at minimum wages in exchange for benefits received. This is the type of program President Reagan tried unsuccessfully to implement when he was governor of California in the early 1970s. Opponents often called the idea "slavefare."

Over the past few years, however, workfare has come to encompass a broad range of work and welfare programs that are often voluntary rather than mandatory and that typically include education, training, job search assistance, childcare, and transportation aid. Rather than being punitive, the goal of the newer programs is to help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

It is not known at this time which of these or other versions of workfare the administration will push, but it can be said that workfare in any form will not significantly reduce either poverty or welfare dependency. Many analysts, myself included, support efforts to increase education, training, and job search assistance, but those who see workfare as a panacea for our poverty problem are likely to be disappointed. More importantly, implementation of a workfare program may lead people to believe, mistakenly, that we have solved the poverty problem or have taken a major step in that direction.

Dr. O'Hare is associate director of research for social policy at JCPS.

### Only A Few Will Benefit

A look at some numbers reveals the limited impact workfare can be expected to have in reducing poverty. In 1985, 20 million adults were living in poverty (including 9 million "working poor") but only 3.5 million families received AFDC (Aid to Families With Dependent Children), the program that is typically tied to workfare (though recipients of food stamps and other welfare benefits are included in some workfare models.) Thus, even if workfare were fabulously successful and the number of AFDC recipients were cut in half (which no one expects), it would reduce the number of adults in poverty by only 5 to 10 percent.

Workfare's impact on welfare dependency would also be minimal. About half of the women who receive AFDC payments need welfare for less than a year; for these women, AFDC provides temporary support for getting through hardships brought on by major events such as divorce or sudden unemployment. These AFDC recipients leave the program after a relatively short time and would probably benefit more from higher payment levels in their period of need than from the workfare program.

Of the group of welfare mothers who stay on welfare for more than a year, many would not be expected to work because they have small children to care for. Furthermore, many long-term welfare mothers are high-school drop-outs with little or no work experience and would therefore require extensive education and training assistance before they could get off the welfare rolls and assume private sector jobs. But programs offering that kind of extensive assistance go far beyond what workfare usually provides.

Once you remove those who are likely to leave welfare soon anyway, those with young children, and those who require a heavy investment, the group for whom a workfare program is likely to make a major difference is relatively limited.

> *Workfare programs may boost earnings, but "have virtually no impact on exit rates from AFDC."*

The evidence to date suggests that workfare-type programs (like ET in Massachusetts and GAIN in California) do help welfare recipients obtain jobs and increase their earnings, but the impact is not large. A recent evaluation of new workfare programs in San Diego, Baltimore, and two counties in Arkansas indicates that workfare programs boost the likelihood of employment by about 6 percentage points and raise earnings by 10 to 36 percent, but they have virtually no impact on exit rates from AFDC. Workfare may initially cost more than welfare but, because a program participant's earnings will rise and welfare benefits will be reduced, the costs to government ultimately will be lower. This type of workfare program will be helpful, but it won't perform miracles.

## Workfare and the Underclass

Workfare applies only to those who already receive benefits. What about the large group of long-term poor (primarily single, young, black men) who typically receive no government benefits at all? There is widespread agreement that many are so poorly educated and lacking in skills that they have no realistic prospects of finding employment without intensive training and assistance.

How well is a workfare-type approach likely to succeed with this group? The best evidence we have on this topic comes from a Supported Work Demonstration Project conducted by the Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC). For about five years in the late 1970s, MDRC focused on four groups whose problems are among the most intractable in our society: long-term welfare mothers, ex-addicts, problem youth (young school drop-outs who often had criminal records and/or histories of delinquency), and ex-offenders.

People in these four groups typically have multiple problems associated with long-term poverty, and they form the core of what many would call an American underclass (see, for example, Ken Auletta's 1981 book, *The Underclass*). If a program of intervention could succeed with these groups, it could probably succeed with almost any other group one can think of.

Not surprisingly, minorities constituted a disproportionate share of these groups. All but 5 percent of the long-term AFDC mothers in the demonstration project were black or Hispanic, as were 6 out of every 7 ex-addicts, 9 out of every 10 ex-offenders, and about 19 out of every 20 people in the problem youth group.

The MDRC project tried to create a bridge between the dependence-inducing environment in which members of the four groups typically lived and the world of self-sufficiency represented by a job in the private sector. The project did this by providing intensive training and counseling under very structured and heavily supervised circumstances. In the words of the MDRC Board of Directors, "The supported work program provided individuals with severe employment problems with work experience of a year or so, under conditions of gradually increasing demands, close supervision, and work in association with a crew of peers." (The Board of Directors, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, *Summary of Findings of the National Supported Work Demonstration*, 1980, p.1).

*A punitive workfare approach will not work with this group because they receive no government benefits.*

Because of the importance of the MDRC project in shaping the kinds of welfare policies that are likely to enjoy support, analysts and observers waited patiently for the results of these efforts to be reported. What have been the results? Most observers would agree with the assessment of Martha Ritter and Sally Danziger that "after five years of operation and evaluation, the results were mixed." They were mixed largely in terms of who was likely to benefit from such an approach.

One group clearly benefited most from the approach used by the Supported Work Demonstration Project: long-term welfare recipients (AFDC mothers, many of whom became parents as teenagers). Following their involvement in the program, their earnings increased and their welfare dependency declined. Furthermore, these positive effects continued even after the experiment, with the special support it offered, had ended.

The results of this segment of the project were so positive that some states incorporated elements of the supported work program into the workfare policies they initiated in the early 1980s. For example, Massachusetts implemented a program entitled ET (Employment and Training) Choices and California began a program called GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence), both of which offer education and training but, unlike the MDRC program, the two states do not offer the intensive, day-to-day supervision and extensive assistance that proved crucial to the success of the MDRC effort.

Though long-term welfare mothers benefited, the other groups in the supported work experiment showed no such gains. The ex-addicts showed a few positive effects, but the assistance that had been provided had almost no positive effects on the problem youths and the ex-offenders.

To the extent that the Supported Work Project identified the target groups that would benefit from its model program of governmental intervention, the project was a valuable experiment. Another benefit of the project was the wealth of data that was collected and maintained—particularly since the data concern groups about whom there is little information from general sources like the Census Bureau.

Perhaps the single most important result of the Supported Work Project was a better understanding of just how deep-rooted the problems of the underclass are and how difficult it will be to develop a government program that is able to have much impact on this group, particularly young unattached males. A punitive workfare approach will not work with this group because they receive no government benefits and the Supported Work Demonstration Project shows that even intensive training and support are not likely to make much of a difference. For this portion of the underclass, radical new solutions must be found.

# 1986 Elections: Major Implications for Black Politics

*by Linda Williams*

Black voters played a crucial role in enabling the Democrats to recapture the U.S.Senate. The question now is what will blacks get for their loyal support? Will the Senate be more responsive when it acts on issues important to blacks? Will the Democratic party treat blacks more favorably or continue to accuse them of running white males out of the party? Will both parties be more likely to frame an appeal to blacks' interests which, as opinion polls show, are increasingly congruent with the interests of whites on a number of key issues? This article explores these and several other questions conerning the implications of the 1986 election results.

## Impact on the Senate Races

The big story of 1986 for black politics was the impact of the black vote in the Democrats' lopsided recapture of the U.S. Senate, with its critical implications for judicial appointments, budgetary priorities, and a wide variety of domestic and international policies (especially relations with South Africa). With the Democrats getting more white votes in 1986 than Mondale won in 1984, their advantage among black voters was the critical factor in at least four Senate races (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina) and, according to CBS and NBC exit polls, in Nevada and California as well. Black voters also signficantly boosted the margin of victory of Democratic senatorial candidates in several other states—especially Maryland and Florida. (See table below.) In short, the black vote, though unable to stop the pro-Reagan tide in 1980 and 1984, was the decisive factor in effectively dealing a major blow to President Reagan and the GOP in 1986 and putting the Democrats on a more even footing for beginning the 1988 presidential race.

## Will the Senate Be Responsive?

The Democratics are more likely than the Republicans to favor a more active role for the federal government. Although it is true that several committees will be chaired by Southern Democrats who are only barely less conservative (or, in some instances, more conservative) than the Republicans they are replacing, in general it looks as if the Democratic-controlled Senate will be essentially more moderate than the 99th Senate— with moderate and moderate-conservative Democrats replacing conservative Republicans in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Nevada, and North Carolina and a liberal Democrat replacing a moderate- liberal Republican in Maryland.

Blacks will benefit from the new moderation as well as from the new chairmen of two committees that control presidential nominations and key legislation of particular interest to blacks: Sen. Joseph Biden (D.-Del.) will replace Sen. Strom Thurmond (R.-S.C.) as chair of the Judiciary Committee, and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.) will replace Sen. Orrin Hatch (R.-Utah) as chair of Labor and Human Resources.

For blacks, the new Democratic Senators may not have been their first choice, but they appear to be far more acceptable than most of the Republicans they replaced. As Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) president Ann Lewis has pointed out, all of the Democratic replacements had higher liberal ratings (where comparable ratings were available) than their defeated Republican opponents; all had liberal ratings over 50 percent; and all campaigned on the issue of a strong role for government in solving the nation's social and economic woes.

(Continued on next page)

**The Black Vote and the U.S. Senate, 1986**

| *State* | *Winner* | *% Black Vote* | *% White Vote* | *% Black of Actual Electorate* | *Winner's % of Total Vote* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | Shelby-D | 88 | 38 | 22 | 51 |
| Calif.* | Cranston-D | 96 | 44 | 7 | 51 |
| Florida | Graham-D | 80 | 52 | 10 | 55 |
| Georgia | Fowler-D | 82 | 39 | 24 | 51 |
| Louisiana | Breaux-D | 85 | 39 | 29 | 53 |
| Maryland | Mikulski-D | 87 | 51 | 18 | 61 |
| Nevada | Reid-D | 71 | 46 | 11 | 51 |
| N.C. | Sanford-D | 88 | 42 | 16 | 52 |

*Data from NBC/*Wall Street Journal* exit poll. All other data from CBS/*New York Times* exit polls.

Dr. Williams is a senior research associate at JCPS.

## Public Wants Activist Government

Even before November's electoral evidence, Gallup polls had found a surge of public support for a more active federal government. When asked whether the federal government has too much power, only 28 percent in 1986 thought so—down from 38 percent in 1982; 24 percent thought the federal government was using the right amount of power—up from 18 percent in 1982; and 41 percent thought the federal government should use its powers more vigorously—up from 30 percent in 1982.

So if you link these trends with the Democrats' Senate gains among constituencies favorable to proactive government, it is easy to understand Senate Democratic Leader Robert Byrd's apparent decision to suspend Gramm-Rudman deficit targets and push new programs in education, science, the environment. Not only has Gramm-Rudman lacked substantial credibility with the public, but poll after poll illustrates the extent to which the electorate favors *increasing* federal outlays in popular areas like education, science, health, and the environment. Thus blacks and whites may not only be viewing the same issues as their most important concerns, as reported in the last issue of *Focus*, but they may also be coming to more agreement on the role of government in resolving these issues.

## Redistricting in 1992

Although black votes for Democratic gubernatorial candidates were just as numerous as for senatorial candidates, black voters had far less impact on gubernatorial races than on senatorial races. For example, 91 percent of blacks voted for the failed candidacy of Democrat William Baxley in Alabama; 90 percent voted for defeated incumbent Democrat Mark White in Texas; not surprisingly, 94 percent of blacks voted for defeated challenger Tom Bradley in California; in Illinois, 81 percent voted for Adlai Stevenson, who lost; and even in Michigan, where William Lucas, a black Republican, was on the ticket, 79 percent of blacks voted for the Democratic victor, incumbent Governor Jim Blanchard. Although black voters boosted the margins of victory of several Democratic gubernatorial candidates, they were decisive in only one gubernatorial race, namely in Pennsylvania where Robert Casey received only 46 percent of the white vote but defeated Bill Scranton by winning 82 percent of the black vote. In general, white voters were not as divided in their preferences for gubernatorial candidates as they were for senatorial candidates, and this factor reduced the influence of the black vote in most gubernatorial races.

The GOP won an additional eight statehouses, and they understandably proud of these results. But a big caveat is in order. There's very little evidence that control of statehouses gives a party a leg up for the next presidential election.

*Gramm-Rudman lacks credibility with the public, which favors increasing federal outlays for education, science, health, and the environment.*

Finally, from the standpoint of controlling 1991 congressional reapportionment (a major GOP goal) the GOP won't have any more big-state governors' mansions in January than it did in 1971 or 1981, two redistricting years about which the GOP has bitterly complained. Couple this with the GOP loss of state legislative seats (the GOP lost roughly 180 state legislative seats and now hold the same percentage of state legislative seats that it holds of U.S. House seats—41), and it is easy to see that the GOP's repositioning at the state level, at least for the moment, is pretty poor. Admittedly, all the big-state governorships and most state legislative seats will be up for grabs again in 1990, but the Democratic pickup of three additional states where they control both houses, and the Republican loss of two, give Democrats something to brag about at the state level as they plan for the coming reapportionment battles.

## Will Democrats Be More Responsive?

At least some Democrats seemed to have awakened to the importance of the black vote in this election. For example, Senator Joe Biden (D-Del.) said on election night that the Democrats can't win in 1988 unless they can maintain the 1986 multi-racial coalition, and Senator-elect John Breaux (D-La.) promised to remember that he could never have won without the black vote. Nevertheless, most Democrats have been noticeably silent on the subject of black political influence. Perhaps the silent majority of Democratic leaders agree with some journalists who are making blacks the heavies in the Democrats' attempts to get their act together. Eight days after the election, one liberal *Washington Post* columnist wrote that in 1988 a heavy black vote for the Democratic candidate "may produce negative side-effects it did not have in this year's reduced electorate." Or, as a Raleigh, North Carolina associate news editor put it, "If black political leaders read too much into the returns of 1986 and do not fashion their agenda with an eye toward winning the next election, they could contribute to a rupturing of the Democratic coalition of which they are a vital part." Apparently no matter what blacks do for the Democrats—including aiding, if not determining, the party's recapture of the Senate—they will be projected as "Typhoid Mary."

(Continued on page 7)

November-December 1986

JCPS

# POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

## Inside This Issue

- Sixty-three percent of the national electorate sat out the 1986 midterm elections, but black voters in some key states turned out in greater proportions than whites.
- Four new members joined the Congressional Black Caucus, representing the Mississippi Delta, Atlanta, Baltimore, and New York.
- Black candidates gained only one statewide seat and five seats in state legislatures; they lost in gubernatorial races in California and Michigan.
- Across the nation, Boston voters defeated (3-1) a referendum to create a separate city composed of minority neighborhoods; Mississippi black leaders are meeting to assess the implications of Mike Espy's election to Congress; and South Carolinans are digesting the fact that black women made up 30 percent of all newly registered voters.

## Some Good News on Voter Turnout

**CURTIS GANS, head of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, says of the low turnout in 1986 that the voters "voted with their bottoms—they sat it out."** Fewer than 4 out of 10 Americans (37.3 percent) went to the polls—the lowest turnout since 1942, when America was at war. **The black turnout nationwide was only 31 percent, though it was considerably higher in some key races (see below). . . . The encouraging news is that the gap between black and white turnout stayed about equal to what it was in the 1984 presidential election year (7 points versus 6 points), which means that it surged dramatically in mid-term elections**—from a gap of 11 points in 1982 to 7 points in 1986. **More encouraging news is that in several important statewide races, the 1986 black turnout equaled** (e.g., Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina) **or exceeded** (e.g., Louisiana, Nevada, Pennsylvania) **the white turnout. Every indication is that the size of the black vote will continue to grow in 1988.** Thus, black voters will be well-positioned in 1988 to determine, in many states, which presidential candidate will receive the state's electoral votes. . . . **Overall, 86 percent of blacks voted for the Democratic candidate in their congressional districts, and 80 percent or more supported Democratic candidates in close senatorial and gubernatorial contests.**

## Black Caucus Has Four New Members

**Four new faces will join the Congressional Black Caucus in the 100th Congress, including one, MIKE ESPY (D-Miss.), who became the first black congressman from Mississippi since Reconstruction. With the reelection of all 19 members who again sought office, the CBC will now have 23 members—a record high. Besides Espy, the other new members are JOHN LEWIS (D-Ga.), KWEISI MFUME (D-Md.), and FLOYD FLAKE (D-N.Y.). . . . Espy, at 32 and now the youngest member of the CBC, won his predominantly black district after another black candidate, ROBERT CLARK, had failed to do so in 1982 and 1984.** The difference in 1986, according to Espy and state Senator HENRY KIRKSEY, was that whites did not mobilize against Espy's candidacy; they sat out the election. **Espy relates the story of white voters who told him they disliked his opponent and could not bring themselves to vote for a black candidate but indirectly supported his candidacy by not voting for anyone. While whites may have helped Espy by staying home, he clear-**

**ly was boosted by a large black turnout,** which was organized by busloads of volunteers associated with the National Black Leadership Roundtable and by successful efforts of the nonpartisan National Coalition on Black Voter Participation. . . . **In Atlanta, JOHN LEWIS coasted to an easy 3-1 victory over the Republican candidate, journalist PORTIA SCOTT. Though Lewis ran strongly among all segments of the black community, his support among whites dropped from 87 percent in the runoff primary to 47 percent in the general election.** As Spelman College political science professor MARILYN DAVIS said, "White voters were less willing to support John Lewis when JULIAN BOND was not his opponent and when there was a Republican candidate on the ballot." . . . **The other two new CBC members won seats previously held by blacks: FLOYD FLAKE replaced ALTON WALDON** (who was in office for only three months as a replacement for his deceased predecessor, the late Rep. Joseph Addabo) in New York's 6th district; **and KWEISI MFUME replaced former Representative PARREN MITCHELL, who retired and ran unsuccessfully as Maryland's lieutenant governor candidate.** Mfume defeated a black Republican candidate, ST. GEORGE CROSSE. . . .

**Two other unsuccessful candidates who had been given a good chance of winning were FAYE WILLIAMS in Louisiana's 8th district and state Senator BOBBY SCOTT in Virginia's 1st district.** In interviews with *TrendLetter*, both candidates reflected on their campaigns. **Williams, who lost because of white crossover voting in this 88 percent Democratic district, was unable to benefit from the unusually high black turnout (67 percent)—a backlash against GOP "ballot security" efforts. In explaining her defeat, Williams cited a sharply negative campaign by her opponent after the primary:** she was accused of supporting drug use because she had worked as counsel to the National Football League Player Relations Committee; she was called "un-American" because her campaign manager was an Arab-American; and she was "made to look like a criminal" by a local newspaper, which brought up an incident from her past in which she was a victim. Williams attributed the negative campaign to the Republican National Committee and said of her opponent that "it's hard to believe the CLYDE HOLLOWAY I saw in the last few weeks was the real person." Williams also said that some black male state legislators in Louisiana did not work hard on her campaign and indicated they seemed to believe a black male should win a congressional seat before a black woman. . . . **In Virginia, BOBBY SCOTT attributed his loss to the difficulty of unseating an incumbent and to the Republicans' superior voter turnout effort:** "They had a phone bank with 25 phones going every night. I just couldn't compete with that." He was pleased, however, with the 60 percent black turnout—very high for an off-year election without any statewide races to draw people to the polls. **Next on the agenda for Scott is to be reelected to his state senate seat when his term expires next year.** As the incumbent, he expects no difficulty in winning. . . . **Apart from Williams and Scott, two other black congressional candidates—both Republicans—were soundly defeated: LAMAR KEELS, in the 4th district of Arkansas, and RON CRUTCHER in the 3d district of Ohio.**

Though the CBC now numbers 23, **Rep. CARDISS COLLINS remains the only black female in Congress. Moreover, black females, although they vote in much higher numbers than black males, were not well represented among the unprecedented number of black congressional candidates this year:** they accounted for only 1 out of every 7 blacks who ran for seats in the U.S. House. There is a growing feeling in the black community that electing more black females to Congress should be a top priority on the coming agenda of blacks for 1988.

## Statewide Office-Holders

**There are still no black governors. Los Angeles Mayor TOM BRADLEY, a Democrat, lost his second bid to become California's top state official, and Republican WILLIAM LUCAS also lost in Michigan, with Congressman JOHN CONYERS and Detroit Mayor COLEMAN YOUNG leading the opposition to Lucas's conservative campaign. Race-based voting is still a factor in statewide election results as was demonstrated by a question NBC News put to voters in its exit polls in California and Michigan.** NBC asked voters if their state was ready to elect a black for governor. Only 40 percent of whites in Michigan and 52 percent in California agreed that it was. Statewide offices remain the most difficult offices for blacks to win. . . . **Only six blacks (all Democrats) won statewide offices in the 1986 election. Five were incumbents: ROLAND BURRIS, the state comptroller in Illinois; RICHARD AUSTIN, the secretary of state in Michigan; REUBEN ANDERSON, a Supreme Court judge in Mississippi; Dennis Archer, a Supreme Court judge in Michigan; and JAMES LEWIS, the state treasurer in New Mexico in 1985.** (Judge Archer and Mr. Lewis had been

appointed to their positions before the elections, but were first elected in November.) **The one new statewide officeholder-elect, FRANCISCO BORGES, was elected state treasurer in Connecticut.**

**Despite Democratic successes in state legislative races, however, black candidates did not fare particularly well. In 1982** (perhaps as a reflection of favorable redistricting after the 1980 Census), **blacks gained 45 additional state legislative seats; in 1984, blacks gained only 7 additional state legislators; and this year, blacks had a net gain of only 9 state legislators.** This is an area for black politicos to set their sights on in 1988 and 1990 if they want to increase their influence following the 1990 reapportionment battles.

# Across the Nation

## Alabama

**REUBEN DAVIS (a school teacher) and CHRIS MCNAIR (a state representative) have become the first blacks ever elected to the Jefferson County Commission.** Davis will represent District 1 and McNair will represent District 2.

## District of Columbia

**Mayor MARION BARRY won a third term by 61 percent to 33 percent over his closest opponent, Republican CAROL SCHWARTZ.** Schwartz, who is white, defeated the mayor in two wards with a high white concentration. **It was the first time since the District was granted home rule in 1974 that the vote was racially split.** Ninety percent of blacks voted for Barry and 85 percent of whites voted for Schwartz.

**In other races, strong bi-racial coalitions supported city council President DAVID CLARKE (who is white), D.C. Delegate WALTER FAUNTROY, School Board Member-elect WILMA HARVEY in Ward 1,** and several other city council members—by wide margins of 75 percent of the vote or above.

**The National Black Leadership Roundtable (NBLR) held a press conference two days after the November election to assess the election results, demonstrate unity among black leaders, and plan a battle for U.S. Rep. CHARLES RANGEL (D-N.Y.) to be elected majority whip of the House. Rangel's chief competitor is Rep. TONY COEHLO (D-Calif.). Coehlo is widely viewed as leading, but Rangel's staff and the NBLR point to a closing of the gap.**

## Florida

**NATHAN PETERS, JR., became the first black elected county commissioner in Gulf County.** When he was a city commissioner, he filed the lawsuit that resulted in the creation of single-member districts for the county commission. His district is 63 percent black and he won 62 percent of the total vote.

## Maryland

**LEMUEL CHESTER II, a 39-year-old Cambridge drug and alcohol counselor, became the first black to be elected to an Eastern Shore county's governing body.** Chester handily defeated his Republican opponent, the Rev. KELFORD JACKSON, a Cambridge black Baptist minister, by a more than 3-to-1 margin, to represent the county's predominantly black 2d district. He has pledged to improve housing, crack down on illegal drugs, and promote economic development. . . . **Two Howard University law school professors won key posts: ISIAH (IKE) LEGGETT became the first black elected to the Montgomery County Council; and ALEX WILLIAMS became the first black state's attorney for Prince Georges County.**

## Massachusetts

**Blacks voted 3 to 1 and whites voted 4 to 1 to defeat a nonbinding secession referendum (better known as the Mandelaville propopostion—named after South African leader Nelson Mandela) for the Roxbury section of Boston. Most political pundits claim that the secession referendum was disproportionately supported by lower-income black Bostonians and disproportionately rejected by middle-class blacks who felt that working within the system was more advantageous to**

(Continued on next page)

**black interests and who also did not want to pay the high taxes that would be required to support "Mandelaville."** Others say that despite the failure of the Mandelaville proposition, it has not only served to demonstrate the frustrations of many black Bostonians but also has elicited an agreement by Mayor RAY FLYNN to deal more constructively with the problems of Roxbury. **Some observers say the defeat of the referendum, which was actively supported by former state legislator and Boston mayoral candidate MEL KING, demonstrates the eclipse of King's influence with blacks.** They point to other black leaders close to Mayor Flynn (e.g., council president BRUCE BOLLING) as the heirs-apparent to King among blacks.

## Michigan

Rumor has it that **former Congressman Charles Diggs will run again for his old seat (13th district, in Detroit) in 1988 after the expected retirement of the incumbent, 77 year-old Congressman George Crockett.** The problem is nobody checked with Crockett, who told *Trendletter*, "it is news to me. I'll be here as long as my health holds out—and my parents lived to a ripe old age."

**Diggs,** once the dean of the state's U.S. House delegation and the powerful head of two committees, **was convicted in 1978 for illegally diverting more than $60,000 of his congressional employees' salaries to pay his personal and congressional bills.** He has now served his sentence and is free to seek office.

## Mississippi

**Blacks in Mississipi are organizing a statewide meeting to assess the meaning of the ESPY victory, to set a legislative agenda for 1987, and to prepare for state legislative, county, and mayoral races in 1987.** Planners hope to determine whether or not there will be an ongoing statewide black organization. **Blacks in the state are also heavily supportive of a lawsuit brought under Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act by state Sen. HENRY KIRKSEY aimed at securing the creation of single-member districts for 20 chancery court districts and 20 circuit court districts.** Currently, there are 40 circuit court judges in the state, and only one (who was appointed) is black; there are 39 chancery judges, and none is black.

## New Mexico

**Former Bernadillo County Treasurer JAMES LEWIS has become the first black statewide elected official in this state.** Lewis, a native of the state, was appointed to the office of state treasurer by outgoing Hispanic Governor TONY ANAYA in December 1985. He handily defeated his Republican opponent, PAUL DONISTHOYSE, by 58 percent to 42 percent. New Mexico is only 2 percent black.

## South Carolina

**This year, although South Carolina gained only a relatively small number of new registrants, black women made significant voter registration increases.** The state registration total grew from 1.2 million in 1982 to 1.3 million in 1986. **Out of every 10 additional registrants, 4 were white women, 3 were black women, 2 were white men, and 1 was a black man.** Black women constituted 30 percent of the overall increase, which was more than the combined increase for white and black men (25 percent). **Blacks compose only 27 percent of the voting-age population in the state, but the total number of black women registrants is now over half the total number of white male registrants.**

## Tennessee

**State Rep. LOIS M. DEBERRY has become the first female House Speaker Pro Tem.** Ms. DeBerry has been a state legislator since 1972.

## Texas

**Winning 3 of every 4 votes cast, South Dallas civic activist EDDIE BERNEICE JOHNSON, vice-president of Governmental and Community Affairs for the Visiting Nurse Association of Texas, became the first black elected to represent Dallas in the state senate since Reconstruction, and the second black woman to serve in the state senate (after former congresswoman and state senator BARBARA JORDAN, who represented Houston).** Johnson will represent the 23d Senate district.

Compiled by: Linda Williams, Senior Research Associate, and Alfred Baltimore, Roster Clerk.

# Black Politics In the Post-Reagan Era

Major elements of the opinion-making community (especially the media) are already beginning to suggest that the post-Reagan era has begun. Here are some of the principal dynamics that will affect blacks:

1) Democrats will run Congress reasonably secure in the belief that their control will continue for the rest of the decade. This is likely to make them somewhat more ambitious to legislate reforms favored by blacks and a large segment of other Americans—especially in the area of education. Almost nothing will be done, however, about civil rights policy, barring a mighty uprising from blacks in the streets and a significant lobbying campaign. Heavy participation at the ballot box was not enough, since Democrats seem to see the 1986 election results as a centrist not as a liberal victory. Despite the great influence of the black vote, the Democrats will be more concerned about keeping a large proportion of the white (especially southern white) vote. It is likely that major elements of both parties will try to curb their ideological wings on the left and right as part of a new and critical competition for a re-emerging political center.

2) Black Republicans will step up their criticisms of their party—especially attacking any future programs such as the backfiring Republican "ballot integrity" project which sought to knock black voters off the voter rolls and made blacks acutely aware that the Republican party was still much more foe than friend. Clarence Thomas, black head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), has already held a news conference criticizing the Republicans for ignoring the black vote. Wise Republicans will be more likely to make some specific appeals to at least try to more successfully split the black vote—especially in the South.

3) Ronald Reagan's governmental views and beliefs—perceived by the white electorate asbenefiting the United States in the early 1980s but bearing less relation to contemporary national needs—will play a diminishing role in 1987-88. With the press on the attack with continued revelations about his foreign policies, Reagan's approval rating will start to decline among all groups—and especially among blacks.

4) Both parties will move away from the old Reagan agenda debate and toward the new issues and independent postures likely to be necessary for success in 1988. With the Democrats' recapture of the Senate, both parties are on more even footing as they turn towards 1988 and every single group's votes will generate more interest.

Blacks, who will be more than 10 percent of the national electorate in 1988, will find themselves at least a bit more courted by Republican contenders—especially moderates. If the Democrats move too far to the right some blacks may try a third party or independent route or may find the Republicans to be more attractive.

5) The 1987 local races (especially mayoral races) may also influence how blacks vote in 1988. The race to watch will very likely be the Chicago mayoral election in April. If national party Democrats remain silent on the fate of incumbent Harold Washington, they may suffer in black support.

In conclusion, the black vote again showed clout in 1986. The turnout gap between blacks and whites was lower than in 1982. It helped not only to elect more blacks and recapture control of the Senate for the Democrats, but to establish a more equal starting point for both parties for 1988. The point now is to see what each party does with this equal footing vis-a-vis black America.

(Continued from page 6)

Thus, the continuing crisis for black politics is the nature of black influence within the two-party system. Black voters played a significant role in Democratic fortunes in 1986, but so far have received little or nothing for it but dire warnings. The most critical question for black politics in 1986 remains: How are blacks to increase their influence in a party to which they give 90 percent of their votes in national elections and rarely under 80 percent in other elections? And at least one of the most critical questions for the Democratic party is: How can it win—especially in the all important South where blacks compose 20 percent or more of the total voting-age population in every Deep South state and at least 10 percent in the Border states—if it alienates the black vote or even depresses black turnout?

After all, Democratic presidential candidates have received a majority of the white vote only once (1964) since 1948, and the 1986 results suggest that while the Democrats may be able to regain a substantial proportion of white voters they are not yet likely to win the majority of white votes in many states, especially in the South. In short, if the Democratic party wants to win in 1988 (and, of course, it does) it must be capable of putting together a coalition that includes at least a substantial proportion of whites (say, 40-45 percent) and maintain its nearly unanimous black support. At the same time, it must appeal enough to blacks to produce an enthusiastic black electorate that turns out in high numbers.

Thus, like it or not, in 1988 the fortunes of the Democratic party will be tied to the black vote. Blacks need to start now deciding that no matter whom they support in 1988, they have a bottom line for what they want in return for their support. ■

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# TELESCOPE

## FEMALE-HEADED FAMILIES DECLINE; BUT REMAIN AT ALARMING LEVEL

The growth rate of families maintained by black women has declined significantly since the mid-1970s, according to the Commerce Department's Census Bureau. Such families grew 41 percent from 1970 to 1975; the growth dropped to 19 percent in the 1980s.

The rate of increase among white female householders also has slowed since 1975, but at a lesser rate than for blacks, the report shows. The white rate dropped to 15 percent in 1980-1985, from 25 percent in 1970-1975.

While growth rates have fallen, the number and proportion of families maintained by women have risen since 1970. For blacks the total rose from 1.4 million to 3 million and for white families from 4.1 million to 6.9 million. Women maintained 44 percent of black families in 1985, up from 28 percent, while women maintained 13 percent of white families, up from 9 percent.

The nation had an estimated 6.8 million black families in 1985, of which 51 percent were married-couple families. Black families totaled 4.9 million in 1970.

The number of white families increased from 46.2 million to 54.4 million in 1970-1985. A husband and wife were present in more than four out of five white families in 1985.

Copies of the final report, *Household and Familiy Characteristics: March 1985*, P-20, No. 411, are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 20402.

The data in this report come from a survey, and are subject to a margin of error that would not be present in a full census of the population. ■

## BLACK POLITICS CONTEST

The Committee for the Status of Blacks of the Western Political Science Association is sponsoring a black politics paper contest.

Papers on black politics (national or international) or other issues of concern to the black community are invited. Two prizes will be awarded: $200 to the first-place winner, $100 to the second-place winner. Winners will be announced at the annual WPSA meetings in Anaheim, California, March 26-28, 1987. Entrants do not need to attend the meeting to enter the contest.

Send papers to (or for further information contact) Professor Vernon D. Johnson, Department of Political Science, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Wash., 98225. ■

## NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT JCPS

Dr. Margaret Simms, an economist, has joined the Joint Center as deputy director of research. Dr. Simms received her doctorate from Stanford University, and taught at Atlanta University from 1972 to 1976, when she was named chairperson of the economics department. In 1977 and 1978 she was a Brookings Economic Policy Fellow at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. She then joined the Urban Institute as a senior research associate in 1979, and was appointed director of the Institute's Minorities and Social Policy program in 1981. Since 1983, Dr. Simms has also served as editor of the *Review of Black Political Economy*. She has written numerous scholarly papers and policy reports and, most recen, was co-editor (with Julianne Malveaux) of *Slipping Through the Cracks: The Status of Black Women*. ■

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